

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY (CFSA)

2007 Quick Reference Guide

MISSING CHILDREN/YOUTH POLICY

When a child or youth is missing from the safety of a secure placement, regardless of why or from where they are missing, they are automatically at tremendous risk for victimization and exploitation. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all resource providers and/or CFSA and contracted agency staff to consider the incident of a missing child or youth as a major and critical event that requires immediate attention.

Reporting Requirements for Resource Providers

Resource providers (including foster parents, kinship caregivers and staff of congregate care facilities) are required by CFSA policy to report a missing child/youth within one (1) hour of the child/youth's absence. In addition to contacting the assigned social worker, the following information should be provided to the local law enforcement agency (911) and the CFSA Hotline (202-671-7233):

- a. the child/youth's name
- b. date of birth
- c. height and weight (approximate)
- d. any unique identifiers, including birthmarks, glasses, braces, tattoos
- e. type of clothing worn by child/youth at time of absence, including brand name and/or colors

Once the missing person's report has been completed by the local law enforcement agency, the resource provider shall make the report number available to the on-going social worker. In the event that the child/youth returns on his/her own volition, the resource provider shall immediately inform the law enforcement agency, the CFSA Hotline, and the child/youth's social worker.

Reporting Requirements of Hotline Workers

The Hotline worker must complete an Information and Referral (I&R) in FACES, as well as a Critical Event Form which can be downloaded from the on-line Missing Children/Youth Policy on the CFSA Intranet. Further, the worker must immediately email and call the child/youth's social worker, supervisory social worker, and the Child Location and Support Services Specialist (CLASS) at 727-7321.

If and when the Hotline Worker is informed that the child/youth has returned, he/she must notify the social worker, supervisory social worker, and the CLASS, in addition to closing out the I&R FACES screen.

Reporting Requirements for the On-Going Social Worker

When informed that a child/youth is missing, the on-going worker shall confirm all details with the resource provider. A diligent search is then required. The worker shall follow the steps for a diligent search as outlined in detail in the Missing Children/Youth Policy. If a report has not been filed by the resource provider, then the worker must file a missing person's report as well as initiate a Child Locator Staffing in accordance with the steps outlined in the CFSA policy.

Social Worker's Tasks when the Child/Youth is Located

When a missing child/youth has been located, the social worker shall immediately contact the Child Location and Support Unit at 727-7321 the local law enforcement agency, birth parents, resource provider, and GAL and/or AAG, if applicable. In addition to completing and submitting a Withdrawal of Custody Order form which can be down-loaded from the on-line Policy Manual on the Intranet, the worker shall complete a referral for a Family Team Meeting within 24 hours of the child's return.

It is imperative that the social worker engage the child to determine the reasons for the child's absence, and within seven days, to interview the child as a prevention measure for further disruption. The CLASS shall take a digital photograph of the child, and submit the photograph to the assigned worker for inclusion in the case file. All of the above shall be documented in FACES.